

TRIBUTE TO BOULDER-DUSHANBE
SISTER CITIES

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities organization and its ongoing work to develop friendship and understanding between the citizens of Boulder, Colorado, and the citizens of Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

In 1987, two cities on opposite sides of the world, in countries on opposite sides of the political spectrum, collaborated to bring their respective traditions, culture, and history to one another in a peaceful manner. During a time of great conflict and tension, the cities of Boulder, Colorado, and Dushanbe, Tajikistan, united as the Sister Cities. Over the next 3 years, dozens of Tajikistani painters, woodcarvers, and ceramicists worked on completing Dushanbe's gift to Boulder, the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse. The result was a magnificent structure and a wonderful restaurant that offers exquisite cuisine and atmosphere.

Now it is our turn to give back to the people of Dushanbe. Planning is well underway for Boulder's reciprocal gift of a cybercafe, which will be part restaurant, learning center, and Internet connection point.

Most of all it will be our way of connecting to Tajikistan—by sharing our culture, helping Tajiks communicate with the outside world, providing educational resources, and investing in their community. At a time when international understanding between countries and their citizens is more valuable than ever, this project deserves strong support.

Mr. Chairman, I've attached a June 2005 newspaper article from The Daily Camera highlighting progress on the cybercafe project. I think it's important to call attention to this project and the volunteer efforts of the Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities organization. On its website, the group writes about the cybercafe that it "hopes that that gathering place, offering computer and Internet access rare in that part of the world, will bring to life the goal of helping people connect through what they have in common rather than what keeps them separate." I share that hope and commend the Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities organization for helping this project come to life.

[From the Daily Camera, June 20, 2005]

RESIDENTS WORK TO REPAY DEBT: DUSHANBE CYBERCAFE PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO START IN FALL

(By Ryan Morgan)

Boulder owes the city of Dushanbe a cybercafe to reciprocate for a teahouse from the Tajikistani capital that opened in Boulder in 1998.

Now, after years of work, the Boulder residents organizing the cybercafe effort have received good news from Dushanbe officials: They expect to break ground on the project this fall.

Don Mock, a former Boulder city councilman and co-president of Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities, said his group learned late last week that city planners in Dushanbe had approved a new site for the cafe.

"It looks like some of the final hurdles have been cleared," he said.

Much of the delay came after Mock and other committee members realized that the

site originally proposed for the cybercafe—one that would have placed it in downtown Dushanbe, next to a large concert hall and the national library—wouldn't work.

It turned out that city planners there wanted every building in that district to be at least five stories tall, far beyond the expected scale and cost of the planned cybercafe. So organizers had to find a new site and alter the building's design.

If all goes well, the cybercafe will sit in Dushanbe's Park of International Friendship, Mock said.

Mock said he thinks the cybercafe will give something of real value to residents of Dushanbe. It will offer books in Tajik and Russian and a "cultural center," he said.

"It's going to be more than a place to check e-mail."

With a final plan in place, the sister cities committee will now start redoubling its fundraising efforts.

"We want to be able to tell these big donors exactly what they'll be getting for their donation," Mock said.

The committee has raised about \$400,000 and will need to raise an additional \$300,000, he said.

Vern Seieroe, an architect helping to design the building, said he is relieved the process of navigating an often confusing bureaucracy located 7,000 miles away will finally yield dividends.

"You can only imagine the obscurity of what the process is, seeing it and attempting to understand it from this distance," Seieroe said. "We're learning a lot. Our learning curve is almost vertical."

Boulder's colorful Dushanbe Teahouse was also the culmination of several years' work and delays. Tajik craftsmen carved the intricate structure, disassembled it into 14 sections and shipped them to Boulder in 1990. The sections sat in storage for years. In 1998, they were re-assembled and the teahouse finally opened its doors.

THE REPUBLICAN RAID ON
STUDENT AID

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support and in solidarity with America's college students and our Nation's higher education institutions. Our competitiveness in the global economy is built on the foundation of a highly educated workforce. My Republican colleagues feel financial aid for higher education is a privilege, not a necessity for American students.

The Republican strategy to cut and gut Federal financial aid by over \$14 billion hurts students, hurts families and threatens America's competitiveness. Harming higher education harms America.

The Republican raid on student aid makes the largest cut in the history of Federal student financial aid, while also increasing the deficit by \$20 billion—adding more debt on the backs of hard working Americans and students.

Tim McDonald attends Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Tim spoke eloquently to me last week against these cuts. Tim said:

The generation that benefited from highly-subsidized, affordable higher education is now pulling the ladder up with them and forcing us to debt finance not only our own education, but their tax cuts. . .

I came to Congress to promote hope and opportunity. Vocational schools, technical schools and our colleges and universities provide America's scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, teachers, nurses, law enforcement officials—our future leaders, with the skills, knowledge and opportunity to keep America strong and prosperous.

Republican priorities cut and gut the vital resources students depend upon to achieve their career goals and contribute to America. Instead of investing in students, instead of investing in America's future, this Republican scam forces students to pay the price for a mismanaged Republican budget.

I ask my Republican colleagues to stand with us and students to protect America's economic future, to not abandon the next generation of American leaders and to defeat the cutting and gutting of hope and opportunity for millions of American students.

HONORING ANTHONY RAFFA ON
HIS CAMPAIGN TO BE ELECTED
TO THE CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 14

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Anthony Raffa, a resident of Chautauqua County for his quest to become the elected representative to the fourteenth legislative district in the Chautauqua County Legislature. Although Mr. Raffa was not able to realize his dream he has been able to make an impact on other's lives in a different way.

The campaign trail is a difficult path to take. Any person with a dream may enter but only a few are able to reach the end. Mr. Raffa traveled that path with his head held high and a smile on his face the entire way. I have no doubt that his kind demeanor left a lasting impression on the voters of district 14.

Mr. Raffa has tried his hand in county politics many times. That is a respectable trait to have. Determination to do good things for your county is one thing that Chautauqua County residents strive for. He was a long time legislator and a long time advocate for "good government."

Chautauqua County is blessed to have such strong candidates with a desire to make this county the wonderful place that we all know it can be. Mr. Raffa is one of those people and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor him today.

TRIBUTE TO T.J. CONNOLLY

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the seventh anniversary of Connolly and Company, a public relations, advertising and marketing firm in San Antonio which is located in the district I represent, the 28th district of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, in 1998, T.J. Connolly had a vision which he put into practice. He recognized a void in public relations that he thought